

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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ORM-02 SCA-01 VO-03 SY-05 OPR-02 INSE-00 /092 W

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O P 181740Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 8110

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, SU, SREF

SUBJECT: PROTESTS BY EX-SOVIET JEWS

1. FOR SECOND STRAIGHT DAY LOCAL OFFICES OF HEBREW IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY (HIAS) ARE CENTER OF DEMONSTRATIONS ON THE PART OF FORMER SOVIET JEWS CURRENTLY HERE IN ITALY AND ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO ENTER A COUNTRY OF FINAL RESETTLEMENT (PRIMARILY THE UNITED STATES). ANSA (ITALIAN PRESS AGENCY) HAS RELEASED STORY STATING THAT A CONSIDERABLE GROUP OF PEOPLE ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE DEMONSTRATION. THE DEMONSTRATORS CLAIM TO REPRESENT A TOTAL OF 800 INDIVIDUALS.

2. VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING IN THE DEMONSTRATION LEFT THE SOVIET UNION AND TRAVELLED TO ISRAEL VIA VIENNA. MOST OF THEM PRESUMABLY HAVE APPLIED FOR REFUGEE STATUS AT INS ROME BUT HAVE BEEN FOUND INELIGIBLE ON THE BASIS OF THEIR PREVIOUS RESETTLEMENT IN ISRAEL.

3. SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEMONSTRATORS HAVE INDICATED TO ANSA
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THAT THEY ATTEMPTED TO OBTAIN A HEARING FROM THE AMERICAN

EMBASSY AT TEL AVIV PRIOR TO THE INDIVIDUAL DEPARTURES FROM ISRAEL BUT TO NO AVAIL. THEY STATE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN EQUALLY UNSUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING A HEARING UPON ARRIVAL IN ROME FROM THE AMERICAN EMBASSY HERE. THEY ARE REQUESTING THAT HIAS PROVIDE THEM WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING THEIR PROCESSING PERIOD IN ROME (HIAS HAS NOT DONE SO IN THE PAST. SOME INDIVIDUALS HAVE, HOWEVER, OBTAINED SUPPORT FROM OTHER VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SUCH AS THE TOLSTOY FOUNDATION AND IRC.) ADDITIONALLY, THEY DESIRE THAT HIAS ASSIST THEM IN PURSUING THEIR VISA APPLICATIONS WITH APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNTRIES TO WHICH THEY WISH TO IMMIGRATE (IN MOST CASES THE UNITED STATES).

4. HIAS DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE HAS COME TO ROME TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEMONSTRATORS. THE MEETING IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE AFTERNOON OF MAY 18. HIAS THEORIZED THAT ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CURRENT EFFORT COMES FROM THREE SOURCES: A) RAV TOV, WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED AN OFFICE HERE; B) THE LIBYANS; AND C) THE SOVIETS.

5. COMMENT. WE DO NOT EXCLUDE THAT THE DEMONSTRATORS WILL TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY AFTER THEY HAVE HAD THEIR HEARING WITH HIAS. TWO INDIVIDUALS HAVE PROTESTED AT THE EMBASSY OVER THE LAST TWO WEEKS ABOUT THEIR INABILITY TO GAIN ADMISSION TO THE US. ONE WAS A TCP CASE AND THE OTHER WAS EX-ISRAEL. WHAT CONCERNS US MOST IS POSSIBILITY THAT CURRENT AGITATION COULD CREATE DIFFICULTIES FOR FUTURE MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE THROUGH ITALY FOR EVENTUAL RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AND ELSEWHERE. TO DATE, THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS MAINTAINED A BENEVOLENT SILENCE IN THE FACE OF THE INCREASING PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRY OF SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN REFUGEES. IN THE INCREASINGLY POLITICIZED ATMOSPHERE THAT IS DEVELOPING HERE AS A RESULT OF THE FORTHCOMING NATIONAL ELECTIONS, THE ITALIANS COULD CHOOSE TO REVIEW THEIR PAST HOSPITALITY IN THE FACE OF THE ABUSES COMING PRIMARILY FROM THOSE WHO ARE REACHING HERE BY WAY OF ISRAEL AND WHO ARE NOT QUALIFYING FOR ONWARD MOVEMENT AS A RESULT OF THEIR RESETTLEMENT IN ISRAEL.

6. SHOULD DEMONSTRATORS COME TO EMBASSY, WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD PROMPTLY RECEIVE SEVERAL OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVES ON THE CONDI-

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TION THAT THE DEMONSTRATION BE DISBANDED FORTHWITH. WE WOULD GIVE TO THEM THE PROVISIONS OF AMERICAN LAW WHICH PERTAIN EITHER TO THEIR ELIGIBILITY OR INELIGIBILITY TO OBTAIN THE RIGHT TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCE. AT THE SAME TIME WE WOULD SUGGEST TO THEM THAT THEIR ACTIONS COULD CALL INTO QUESTION ON THE PART OF THE ITALIAN AUTHORITIES THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE IN ITALY AND THE POSSIBLE FUTURE ENTRY INTO ITALY OF OTHER REFUGEES COMING FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND EAST EUROPE.

7. IN RESPONSE TO NUMEROUS PRESS INQUIRIES ABOUT THE ANSA STORY,
WE HAVE REPLIED THAT THIS EMBASSY GIVES
FULL AND EQUAL CONSIDERATION TO ALL APPLICATIONS FOR ENTRY INTO
THE UNITED STATES IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING LAWS AND
REGULATIONS. INDIVIDUALS IN QUESTION HAVE BEEN FOUND INELIGIBLE
EITHER BECAUSE THEY NO LONGER QUALIFY AS REFUGEES OR FOR OTHER
VALID REASONS ENUMERATED IN US LAW.VOLPE

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